

Workshops Offered for Small-Scale Entrepreneurs and Food Processors in the Northeast

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by Cheryl Leach

GENEVA, NY: The Northeast Center for Food Entrepreneurship (NECFE) is holding a series of hands-on workshops for food manufacturers, small scale processors of specialty foods, farmers interested in value-added processing and anyone interested in starting a small-scale food manufacturing business.

The first workshop, entitled "Good Manufacturing Practices for the Production of Shelf-Stable Acid, Acidified (Pickled) and Dehydrated Foods," will be offered at the Food Research Laboratory, at Cornell University's New York State Agricultural Experiment Station, in Geneva, NY, on October 6, from 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m. It will provide current and future small processors with the basic elements needed to understand the main processing steps, critical control points and record-keeping to safely manufacture specialty food products for the marketplace.

Technical information and practical demonstrations of the production of BBQ sauce, pickled vegetables, and dried fruit, will be the primary focus of the workshop.

Future workshops include "Fermented Sausage and Jerky," in Ithaca, NY, on December 8; "Next-Level Entrepreneurship Training for Small and Specialty Food Producers," on January 9-10, Jan. 23-24, and Feb. 20-21, 2001, in Geneva, NY; "A Taste of Specialty Foods," presented at the 2001 Farmers' Direct Marketing Conference in Owego, NY, on February 5, 2001; and "Food Safety for the Entrepreneur," offered March 22, 2001, in Burlington, Vermont.

The program for "Good Manufacturing Practices" will be held in the Food Science Conference Room, and starts at 8:30 a.m. with registration. Morning presentations include "Food Production and Good Manufacturing Practices," by Cornell University food microbiologist Randy Worobo, and "Production of Acid/Acidified Foods &

Dehydrated Foods," by NECFE Director Olga Padilla-Zakour. After lunch, hands-on experience will be provided in pre-sanitation of equipment; sorting, washing and sanitizing fruits and vegetables (critical control points, measurements and record keeping); fruit and vegetable preparation (cutting and slicing; critical points and sanitation); production of acid and acidified product (pH measurements, calibrations, and thermal processing); and demonstration of dehydrated product production, water activity and moisture content determination.

NECFE is a regional program, funded by the USDA and The Fund For Rural America, offered through Cornell University at the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station, and the University of Vermont in Burlington, Vt.

For more information, or to pre-register for the first workshop, contact Judy Anderson, at 315-787-2273, FAX 315-787-2284 or email her at jl2@cornell.edu. Registration is limited to 40 people. The fee is \$50.

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